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OMB:

My comment is directed specifically to outsourcing that would affect the core statistical functions of government agencies. My special expertise is in the area of crime and justice, but the general position applies to those functions in other areas.

The analysis and interpretation tasks, as well as the overall management of the major statistical series regarding crime and punishment in the US, are inherently governmental functions, and should not be subject to outsourcing. The nation relies on the integrity of this information for accurate knowledge of crime rates, patterns of victimization, and the effectiveness of crime control policy (including policing, prosecution, courts, prisons, and community corrections). This information must remain free of political control, and it must continue to be produced according to the highest methodological standards.

That is precisely the current situation at the Bureau of Justice Statistics in DOJ. There is no reason to fix what is not broken, and every reason to support the efforts of the BJS staff in their work. The BJS staff numbers some 55 - 60 persons, an extraordinary number given the sheer quantity not to mention the quality of their output each year. There may be a few remaining lower-level functions at BJS that might be appropriately put out to bid, but the great majority of positions are integral to the core statistical functions of the agency. The best way to insure the independence and integrity of those functions is through civil service protection from the efforts of political officials, in and outside of DOJ -- under any administration -- to manipulate the production and dissemination of information for political gain. The quality and breadth of crime statistics in the US are recognized throughout the world. Here is a paradigm case of leaving well enough alone.

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